

The University of Chicago

CARL SCHURZ AND THE CIVIL WAR

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

1933

By

BARBARA DONNER

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CARL SCHURZ AS OFFICE SEEKER

BARBARA DONNER¹

CARL Schurz, at the Lincoln inauguration, occupied a conspicuous place on the improvised platform in front of the great portico of the capitol. With throngs of other Republicans he had come to see Lincoln safely inaugurated and ambitious Republicans properly rewarded.

Schurz very early in the campaign entertained the idea of a diplomatic appointment but not until after the election did he make known his wishes.² In a letter to John F. Potter, who had on a previous occasion volunteered to look after Schurz's interests, the young German definitely explained the position he desired to occupy under the new administration.³ If the government intended offering him anything, he desired that it should be a position which would enable him to do something, for he did 'not want a sinecure.' Furthermore, since he was looked upon as the representative of the German element, he considered it due to those whom he represented not to take an inferior place. To be sent to Germany would gratify his feelings most but as that might bring up questions of 'etiquette unpleasant to the administration,'

¹This is the first of two chapters from the author's doctoral dissertation on 'Carl Schurz and the Civil War' which we have agreed to publish in this magazine. Two preceding chapters of the dissertation dealing with Schurz's life in Germany and in the United States to the time of the Lincoln inauguration will not be published.—EDITOR.

²In a letter to Mrs. Schurz of July 1, written after a session of the Republican national committee of which Schurz was a member, he states: 'The question came up as to what would follow upon the election of Lincoln. That I was to go to a European Mission was treated as if it were a matter of course.' Joseph Schafer, *Intimate Letters of Carl Schurz, 1841-1869* (Madison, 1928), 211-212.

³Letter to Potter, November 30, 1860, Frederic Bancroft, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz* (New York, 1913), i, 165-168.

Prussia and Austria were out of the question. The mission to Paris required an experienced diplomat. Italy he felt would be the place for which he was best fitted. The statesmanship of Cavour, the heroic deeds of the patriot Garibaldi, and the stand taken by Victor Emmanuel we may be certain fascinated the fiery soul of the young liberal. Although definitely stating that the letter was not an application and that he desired no one to act as his agent, he, nevertheless, informed Potter that he might confidentially communicate his wishes to Senator James R. Doolittle and that Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois would be the man most likely to know Lincoln's plans. There is a faintly discernible impatience about the letter in spite of Schurz's seeming willingness to abide by whatever decision might be made by the administration. A month later he again informed Potter that in his opinion to ask for an office was to pay too high a price for it.⁴ The adulation he had received as a campaign orator no doubt led him to think that his cherished ambition would be gratified without any exertion on his part. By the fourth of March, Schurz had evidently changed his mind for, after the inauguration, instead of leaving for Wisconsin he remained at the Gerhardt hotel.

Soon the *Evening Star* informed the public as to Schurz's reasons for remaining in the capital city.⁵ He was demanding the first class mission to Sardinia, it stated, in much the same manner in which he had demanded to be made a commissioner to the Peace conference. This editorial immediately started a journalistic battle. Not only did the Democrats take advantage of the opportunity to make political capital for themselves, but the party for which he had so faithfully labored was not united on the issue. The only lead-

⁴ Letter to Potter, December 24, 1860, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 172-176.

⁵ *Evening Star*, Washington, March 6, 1861.

ing Republican paper in the East to push Schurz's appointment was the New York *Tribune*. On the other hand, the Republican press of the West gave him its loyal support. To go through the files of the American newspapers for March, 1861, is to convince one that there is much truth in the statement made by the New York *Herald* that, 'next to the difficulty about Fort Sumter the question as to what is to be done with Carl Schurz seems to bother the administration more than anything else.'⁶

The New York *Times* on March 10 gave quite a representative opinion of the opposition wing of the Republican party. It would be a mistake, it stated, to send Schurz to Sardinia as there would be grave danger of his interfering with the domestic affairs of that country. It felt that if there were no one else to represent the United States abroad, there might be some excuse for committing this 'most important branch of our public service to foreign hands.' As an eloquent and popular politician it recommended that Wisconsin reward him or that Lincoln give him such office at home as he saw fit. But it hoped Schurz would not trespass upon what it regarded as the 'evident proprieties of the case by pushing his claim for a foreign mission.' The New York *World* agreed with the *Times* in the stand taken in regard to the appointment of foreigners to European courts.⁷ It was willing that they be given all the advantages of citizens among ourselves but declared that America should be represented in Europe by Americans. It noted with satisfaction that the proposal that Carl Schurz receive a foreign appointment met with quite general disapproval. That he was a man of considerable ability and an effective speechmaker was conceded. But granting all this, it could not see that it made the policy

⁶ New York *Herald*, March 19, 1861.

⁷ New York *World*, March 11, 1861. (Claimed to be a conservative Republican paper.)

of sending back to Europe a political refugee as our representative 'a whit more proper not to say defensible.' The direct personal contact with the representatives of the very powers against whom he had committed an offense certainly did not constitute tact and courtesy in diplomacy. The editorial closed with the following appeal: 'Let us welcome political exiles, cherish their virtues, sympathize with their misfortunes and defend them against the world, but let us not confess that America can not produce men who can worthily represent her abroad.'

Horace Greeley with his powerful New York *Tribune* gave the young German his loyal support.⁸ In his opinion no man was better qualified for the service or deserved more from the Republican party. Instead of interfering in affairs in Italy he thought that Schurz would be just the man to send to a liberal court and that it was time we were sending to Turin a man in sympathy with the Italian struggle for self-government. Greeley denied that Schurz was a foreigner, but considered him an excellent and eminent American citizen and that unless naturalization be a fraud, Schurz was just as much entitled to a foreign mission as any other American citizen. He considered him 'a profound scholar, a ripe and thoughtful statesman and an ardent devotee of popular rights and liberal institutions.' He knew of no man 'more admirably qualified to represent the greatest Republic on earth at the Court of the Liberal and popular ruler of up-risen and regenerated Italy.'

The Chicago *Tribune*, the leading Republican paper of the West, maintained if anyone were qualified to fill a foreign mission it was Carl Schurz and that if anyone carried with him to Washington the ardent support of the North-

⁸ New York *Tribune*, March 11, 1861.

west it was he.⁹ Although admitting that there might be cogent reasons why Schurz should not be sent to Sardinia, the Milwaukee *Sentinel* was ready and willing to consider him an honorable and gifted citizen of the state, whose appointment to any distinguished post would be 'both a compliment to himself and the state of his adoption.'¹⁰ The St. Louis *Democrat* with its large number of German subscribers declared that the wisest and ablest citizen, regardless of foreign birth, was the best representative of the American people. It was inclined to think that the jealousy of rival candidates was the most formidable of obstacles to Schurz's appointment, for in its opinion 'all other circumstances conspired to point him out as the man best adapted to fill the place.'¹¹

The attacks by the Democratic press were most vitriolic even for those days of unbridled journalism. James Gordon Bennett of the New York *Herald* took a particular delight in hurling his missiles at the young German. He did not doubt that the immigrating European radicals of 1848 had contributed materially to the election of Lincoln and the success of revolution on this continent, but he doubted that men of revolutionary ideas would make acceptable ministers to foreign countries especially since they would have to compete with the representatives of the southern confederacy who would all be 'respectable natives.'¹² The *Morning Pennsylvanian* considered Schurz a compound of red and black Republicanism and an insolent, arrogant infidel and demagogue.¹³ Branding him as a vagabond and an adven-

⁹ Chicago *Tribune*, March 25, 1861.

¹⁰ Milwaukee *Daily Sentinel*, March 28, 1861.

¹¹ St. Louis *Democrat* (as quoted in the *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 19, 1861).

¹² New York *Herald*, March 7, 1861.

¹³ *Morning Pennsylvanian*, Philadelphia, March 16, 1861. Schurz was a liberal in religion.

turer, the *Milwaukee News* stated that he professed to be a lawyer although he had never practiced his profession to the extent of a single suit in court and that he was nothing but a mercenary lecturer who demanded and received pay for all the services he had rendered to the party.¹⁴ One could not expect the Democratic press to deal kindly with Schurz, for after all, to win thousands of former German Democrats over to the Republican party was a grave offense.

During this heated debate by the American press, Schurz remained at Washington awaiting the administration's decision, but the middle of March came without his wishes having been fulfilled. That William H. Seward was blocking the appointment seemed to be quite generally understood. Democratic newspapers repeatedly expressed the idea that the 'Premier' was opposed to any policy which embraced the appointment of foreigners to European courts.¹⁵ Charles Francis Adams II in his *Autobiography* states that on Sunday, March 10, Charles Sumner, feeling in a loquacious mood, said that the diplomatic corps was disgusted with the possible nomination of Schurz to Turin, that Seward had convinced Lincoln that Schurz should not be sent, and that Lincoln had sent the young German to Seward to fight it out.¹⁶ Frank P. Blair, in a communication to Cassius Clay,

¹⁴ The *Milwaukee News* (as quoted in the *Oshkosh Courier*, March 22, 1861). Schurz in a letter of December 22 to J. P. Sanderson gives the following information in regard to money received for his services in the campaign: 'From the National Committee, \$500; from Indiana, \$500; from Pennsylvania not \$800 but \$600; and, aside from that here and there small amounts for extra expenses incurred, the whole amounting to a little over \$1800.' Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 172.

¹⁵ *Morning Pennsylvanian*, March 16 and 26, 1861; *Cincinnati Commercial*, March 20, 1861; *Weekly Wisconsin Patriot*, Madison, March 30, 1861; the *Chicago Daily Post*, March 20 and 28, 1861.

¹⁶ Charles Francis Adams, *An Autobiography*, 1835-1915 (New York, 1916), 103. In Charles Francis Adams' diary for March 10, he states that Seward had told him that 'Mr. Schurz had pressed the President so hard to go to Sardinia that he had been obliged freely to state the objections to his nomination; and greatly to his surprise, early the next morning Mr. Schurz called upon him and soon let him know that he had been made the master of his most confidential communications. This had compelled him to a frank and decided conversation with Mr. Schurz, which ended with his consent to withdraw himself, and the President

also indicates that Seward did not favor the appointment.¹⁷ In a letter to his wife Schurz commented on Seward's objection.¹⁸ The fact that the New York *Times* and the Weed organ at Albany opposed the appointment might also be indicative of Seward's stand.¹⁹ To send to Europe at this critical time a man who had so recently engaged in revolutionary movements would, in the opinion of the secretary of state, be a mistake.²⁰ Schurz's radicalism on the slavery question also militated against him. Furthermore, as an easterner Seward probably favored his own section in the distribution of the spoils.

Lincoln, no doubt, was inclined to give Schurz what he wanted for he fully realized the important part that the German vote had played in his election. His policy toward foreigners had been made clear at the time of the controversy relative to the famous two-year amendment.²¹ Moreover, as

declared himself greatly relieved at this interference of his Secretary.' Memorandum read by Charles Francis Adams, Massachusetts historical society *Proceedings*, xli, 1907-1908, 115-117.

¹⁷ Cassius Marcellus Clay, *The Life of Cassius Marcellus Clay, Memoirs, Writings and Speeches* (Cincinnati, 1886), i, 278.

¹⁸ Letter to Mrs. Schurz, March 28, 1861, Schafer, *Intimate Letters*.

¹⁹ Albany *Journal*. The Chicago *Daily Post*, March 20, 1861, makes the following interesting comment: 'The Catholic Bishops of Albany and New York through Weed are exerting influence against sending Schurz to Sardinia.'

²⁰ Carl Schurz, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1906-1908), ii, 218. Some of Seward's objections as given by the press are as follows. 'Seward's plea is that as it will be necessary to cultivate the friendliest possible relations with the European powers in order to prevent the recognition of the Southern Confederacy it is impolite to force obnoxious individuals as representatives of this government upon them. Another objection to Schurz is the well known violent prejudices Italians entertain toward Germans.' Cincinnati *Commercial*, March 16, 1861. 'It is said that Secretary Seward objects to the appointment of Mr. Schurz on the ground that though it might be acceptable to Victor Emmanuel there is no need to unnecessarily annoy France and Prussia.' In *Weekly Wisconsin Patriot*, March 30, 1861.

²¹ In a reply to Theodore Canisius as to his stand on the Massachusetts amendment Lincoln stated: 'Understanding the spirit of our constitution to aim at the elevation of men, I am opposed to whatever tends to degrade them. I have some little notoriety for commiserating the oppressed Negro; and I should be strangely inconsistent if I could favor any project for curtailing the existing rights of white men, even though born in different lands and speaking different languages from myself.' John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works* (New York, 1894), i, 534-535.

early as February he had assured Schurz that he would be handsomely rewarded and later had definitely promised him a first class mission.²² But Lincoln at this time was feeling his way. He had not yet seen fit to inform the 'Premier' that he intended exercising the functions incumbent upon him as the president.

Things looked gloomy for Schurz, and no doubt the serenade given him by the German Republican club at Washington added considerably to his morale. It is significant that he at this time admitted his willingness to forget his party 'if by party nothing more is meant than the mere accidental organization of men for certain purposes.'²³ The rumor that Schurz had been offered Brazil or Portugal soon gained wide credence.²⁴ But the young German 'rated his services high' and was still holding out for a European mission.²⁵ By March 18 a letter from Lincoln to Seward shows that it had been definitely decided that Schurz was not to be sent to Sardinia.²⁶ Two days later the newspapers announced

²² Letter to Mrs. Schurz, February 10, 1861, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 179-180. Letter to Mrs. Schurz, March 13, 1861, Schafer, *Intimate Letters*, 250-252.

²³ *National Republican*, Washington, March 15, 1861.

²⁴ Lafayette *Daily Courier*, March 20, 1861; *Morning Pennsylvanian*, March 15, 1861; *New York Times*, March 14, 1861; *New York World*, March 12, 1861; *Wisconsin State Journal*, March 20, 1861; *St. Louis Anzeiger* (as quoted in the *Chicago Evening Post*, March 24, 1861); *Cincinnati Commercial*, March 20, 1861.

²⁵ Letter to Mrs. Schurz, March 13, 1861. 'There has been a rumor that Brazil would be offered me. It is certain that those who want Sardinia for another are pressing for this solution. So far I have given my friends to understand that I should not accept it. If Lincoln brings the question up I shall insist upon Sardinia without definitely refusing the other mission.' Schafer, *Intimate Letters*, 250-251. 'The difficulty is sought to be relieved by the offer to Schurz of the mission to Brazil, but he rates his services high and thinks he should be left to pick and choose.' The *Morning Pennsylvanian*, March 15, 1861. The *St. Louis Anzeiger* stated: 'What he wanted was sphere of action where he might do something for humanity, for fame and immortality.' (As quoted in the *Chicago Evening Post*, March 24, 1861.)

²⁶ Letter above referred to: 'I believe it is a necessity with us to make the appointments I mentioned last night—that is, Charles F. Adams to England, William L. Dayton to France, George P. Marsh to Sardinia and Anson Burlingame to Austria. These gentlemen all have my highest esteem, but not one of them is originally suggested by me except Mr. Dayton. Mr. Adams I take because you suggested him, coupled with his eminent fitness for the place. Mr. Marsh and Mr. Burlingame I take because of the intense pressure of their respective States

the confirmation by the senate of the appointment of George P. Marsh of Vermont for the Sardinian mission. Italy, jubilant with the sensation of her new existence, had been denied to Schurz.

As the end of March approached, the situation became precarious. Schurz's patience was nearly exhausted and if one may believe the comments of the Democratic press, his determination to hold office caused him to lose some of his rational factors and assume a threatening attitude.²⁷ The same Democratic papers that were taking a stand against Schurz now saw an opportunity to make political capital of the situation by reproaching the Republican party for its Know-nothing tendencies.²⁸ The Germans, becoming increasingly conscious of their nationality, were making Schurz's case a test of the application of the foreign plank in the party platform.²⁹ The Republicans of the West were cognizant of the fact that the existence of the party depended

and their fitness also. . . . This being done, leaves but five full missions undisposed of—Rome, China, Brazil, Peru, and Chili. *And then what about Carl Schurz; or, in other words, what about our German friends?* Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works*, ii, 24.

²⁷ 'His appointment to some European Court is understood to have been demanded by him and his German republican friends as the price of the future allegiance of the German republicans throughout the United States to the party.' *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 1861. The Washington correspondent of the *Indianapolis Sentinel* says he heard Schurz while under great excitement on account of Seward's position in regard to his appointment exclaim 'That the republican party had inherited the meanest ingredient of Know-Nothingism; that there was more sense of honor and gratitude in the lowest democrat than in the whole of Lincoln's administration; that he would show them, however, that he was not going to beg favors at their feet and that he would reckon with them before he died.' *Freeport Weekly Bulletin*, April 18, 1861. Also see *Morning Pennsylvanian*, March 26, 1861; *Cincinnati Commercial*, March 29 and April 31, 1861; *Chicago Evening Post*, March 24 and 28, 1861.

²⁸ *Weekly Wisconsin Patriot*, March 23 and 30, 1861; *Chicago Times* (as quoted in the *Freeport Weekly Bulletin*, March 30, 1861; *Chicago Daily Post*, March 24, 1861.

²⁹ *New York Herald*, March 19, 1861. *St. Louis Anzeiger* (as quoted in the *Chicago Evening Post*, March 24, 1861). It stated that it was a well known fact that the Germans turned the tide in the election, that Schurz's case was a test case and if true that all New England was against the appointment it was due to nothing but a greediness for office and a 'narrow hearted nativism.'

on its German adherents. Furthermore, sectional rivalry entered in to make the controversy more virulent.

Cartoonists saw humor in Schurz's struggle for office. One of the most significant cartoons pictures a scene in a room of the White House. A large group of office seekers are anxiously awaiting an interview with the president. Schurz, with bleary eyes and a bewildered countenance, occupies a conspicuous place among the group while the white frocked philosopher, Horace Greeley, is sympathetically leading him toward the room in which Lincoln is rewarding faithful Republicans.³⁰ *Vanity Fair*, the famous humorous magazine of the period, presented its version of the affair.³¹ In an article entitled 'Can't Have a Foreign Mission' is found the following:

Because why? Why because Carl Schurz, the *Illustrierte Zeitung* now before us says that your's under condemnation of Death out there in Deutschland. Big Thing for you, Carl. Rope, you know—slipper-noose around the gurgle—chokes like averdings. To be sure it was all for Liberty—or rather Freiheit—any you're an exiled patriot. . . . To be sure 'twould be a great crow for you—a very great crow—to sail back in glory whence you run like a good fellow—but 'twould be death for us. Grim and sudden.

All indications lead one to believe that the man who was later to become one of the outstanding leaders of the Civil Service Reform movement was getting personal experience in regard to the demoralizing effect of the spoils system.³²

What to do with Schurz was a perplexing problem, for all the first class European missions to which he could have been sent had been filled. Seward evidently was remaining

³⁰ *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, New York, April 6, 1861.

³¹ *Vanity Fair*, New York, March 23, 1861.

³² Schurz in his *Reminiscences* states that at this time he had not yet gained a deep enough insight into the demoralizing influence of the spoils system to enable him to appreciate the significance of the spectacle he was witnessing, and that, considering the critical situation it was fair to conclude that if ever a clean sweep was justifiable it was at this time. Schurz, *Reminiscences*, ii, 217.

adamant. But by this time Lincoln was ready to assert himself. The secretary of state was to learn that the former rail splitter had no intention of being a mere figure head. At last Lincoln saw the light. Cassius Clay had been appointed to the Spanish mission. He had, however, previously expressed his desire to go to Russia, as the 'effete government of Spain' had no charms for him.³³ On March 26, Montgomery Blair sent the following telegram to Clay: 'It is important that Schurz should have a place in Europe. I advise you to take Russia instead of Spain. You will make immense capital of it.'³⁴ This was followed by an urgent request by Frank P. Blair in which he stated:

It seems that Seward has contrived to fill every first class mission in Europe which Carl Schurz could accept, without providing for that gentleman; and now it is expected that he is to accept some place of inferior grade or be left out in the cold altogether. In this condition of affairs the President authorized the Judge to telegraph you, to know whether you would take the Russian mission, which I believe is \$17,000 per annum, and thus open the Spanish mission to Schurz. I think if you would do this, it would be a great thing for you, and would give you a great hold on the Germans, and the radical men of the party who feel that this embarrassment is a contrivance of Seward's from which we would be relieved by your magnanimity. I trust you will see this in the light in which it appears to all your friends here and do yourself credit and honor in the act and at the same time you will have the most splendid court in Europe. Schurz will not be received in that court on account of his being a political refugee and this is the only reason why it is not tendered to him.³⁵

The messages to Clay had their desired effect. A little after midnight of March 28 Schurz was awakened with the news that Cassius Clay had consented to accept the Russian mission. That morning Schurz went to the White House where Lincoln greeted him with a paper on which was written: 'I nominate Carl Schurz of Wisconsin to be Minis-

³³ Clay, *Memoirs*, I, 254.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 278.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

ter Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary to Spain.' 'Seward's influence has been defeated,' wrote Schurz, 'and I am master of the battle field. It is a victory. Next to Mexico, Spain is the most important diplomatic post and it is mine.'³⁶

The Chicago *Tribune* rejoiced that Schurz had been assigned a first class mission,³⁷ while the Milwaukee *News* stated

that impudence had triumphed over all obstacles. . . . With an audacity that could not be repulsed, an impudence that never blanched and a shamelessness that knew no blush this foreign adventurer and mercenary soldier takes the President of the United States by the throat in the midst of his councillors of State and with taunting words and threats demands a place to which only distinguished citizens and accomplished statesmen have a right to aspire.³⁸

The Cincinnati *Commercial* said that Seward had yielded only because of the 'personal wishes of the President and representations of Western politicians who became alarmed at the consequences of the supposed dissatisfaction of the German Republicans of the Northwest with the apparent intention of the administration to disregard their claims.'³⁹

³⁶ Letter to Mrs. Schurz, March 28, 1861, Schafer, *Intimate Letters*, 252-253. That day Albert G. Browne Jr., the private secretary of the governor of Massachusetts, wrote: 'It is a matter of congratulations today among Seward's opponents that he has suffered the first serious defeat which he has yet experienced in respect to any appointment, in the instance of Schurz against whom for a European mission he had made an especial point. . . . On the question of Schurz's confirmation today all the venerables among the Republicans voted No.' 'Letters to Governor John A. Andrew in March 1861,' Mass. hist. soc. *Proc.*, lxii, 1928-29, 210.

³⁷ Chicago *Tribune*, March 29, 1861.

³⁸ Milwaukee *Daily News* (as quoted from the Milwaukee *Sentinel*, April 1, 1861).

³⁹ Cincinnati *Commercial*, April 3, 1861. The following letter which the Cincinnati *Commercial* states was written by a man who had been a warm admirer of Schurz also appears in this issue: 'Carl Schurz has at last grasped one of the diplomatic prizes, for which he has contended so strenuously during the last four weeks. But although he came out of the contest victorious it would have been far better for him had he never made his appearance in the public arena in the capacity of a place seeker. . . . Had he remained in Wisconsin awaiting Executive favor, instead of soliciting it, his well earned fame would still be untarnished. The lust of office . . . seized him and its degenerating impulses

The New York *Herald* was positive that a red Republican who repudiated the Christian religion and worshipped the Goddess of Reason would not be received by the 'most loyal and inflexible Catholic Power on the face of the Earth.'⁴⁰ In the light of 'previous outrages of the American policy in Spain,' Horace Greeley did not doubt that a minister whose appointment afforded evidence that our Manifest Destiny in the new hemisphere was a thing of the past would be most cordially received.⁴¹ And thus, the young German was for a time dropped from the editorial pages of the American newspapers.⁴²

The victory won, Schurz left for his home in Wisconsin to make preparations for his early departure to Madrid, but the firing on Fort Sumter followed by Lincoln's call for troops caused a change in his plans. Schurz, now realizing that war was inevitable, put the pistols which he had carried in the Kinkel rescue into his handbag and started for Washington.⁴³ Soon he was at the White House in conference with the president to whom he expressed a desire to resign his mission to Spain and to join the volunteer army.⁴⁴

dressed his record with a taint that will never be fully wiped out. . . . It was humiliating to listen to the general derision of the persistency with which he thrust himself upon the President two or three times a day. His best friends, indeed could not help experiencing feelings of disgust at the utter absorption of all self respect by his selfish aspiration and the surpassingly indiscreet sayings and doings to which he was prompted in his pursuit of office. . . .'

⁴⁰ New York *Herald*, April 4 and 5, 1861.

⁴¹ New York *Tribune*, April 4, 1861.

⁴² Schurz in his *Reminiscences* written in the tranquil days of old age gives the following version of the affair: During the campaign it had not occurred to him that his efforts as a public speaker would be rewarded. After the campaign his friends persuaded him or rather he 'easily persuaded himself' that it was entirely proper to expect some office of 'importance and dignity.' He visited Lincoln frequently in the interest of his friends, but his own case was never mentioned. Not until after his appointment to the Spanish mission did he learn of Seward's objection of which he approved and inwardly reproached himself for not anticipating. With somewhat more candor he explains this lack of foresight by saying that his pride or 'more properly his vanity' was immensely flattered by the thoughts of a European mission. Schurz, *Reminiscences*, ii, 220.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 223.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 224.

Some idea of Schurz's state of mind at the time is reflected in the following notation from John Hay's diary:

Schurz was here to-day. He spoke with wild enthusiasm of his desire to mingle in the war. He had great confidence in his capability of arousing the enthusiasm of the young. He contemplates the career of a great guerilla chief with ardent longing. The Seventh Regiment Band played gloriously on the shaven lawn at the south front of the Executive mansion. The scene was beautiful. Through the luxuriant grounds the gayly dressed crowds idly strolled, soldiers loafed on the promenades, the martial music filled the sweet air with vague suggestions of heroism, and Carl Schurz and Lincoln talked.⁴⁵

Lincoln did not favor the resignation, but when Schurz suggested a leave of absence for the purpose of organizing a volunteer cavalry regiment, the president, much against General Scott's wishes, acceded to the plan.⁴⁶ For the purpose of facilitating the process of organization, Secretary of War Cameron, no doubt at the president's request, on May 1 issued a circular to the governors of the states informing them of Schurz's plans, and soliciting their coöperation.⁴⁷ On May 3, Lincoln, in his second call for troops directed that the 'regular army be increased by the addition of eight regiments of infantry, one regiment of cavalry and one regiment of artillery.'⁴⁸

Schurz left immediately for the city of New York where he began recruiting among the Germans, many of whom had already enlisted in the infantry service.⁴⁹ In a short time several companies were in the process of organization, a considerable number of the men receiving board and lodging at

⁴⁵ Notation in Hay's diary, April 26, 1861. William Roscoe Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay* (Chicago, 1915), i, 101.

⁴⁶ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, ii, 230. William H. Beach, *The First New York (Lincoln) Cavalry* (New York, 1902), 11-12.

⁴⁷ *War of the Rebellion Records*, series iii, vol. i, 140-141. That Secretary Cameron opposed the project is brought out in, Beach, *The First New York Cavalry*, 20; James H. Stevenson, *Boots and Saddles, A History of the First Volunteer Cavalry of the War* (Harrisburg, 1879), 24-26.

⁴⁸ Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works*, ii, 41.

⁴⁹ Beach, *The First New York Cavalry*, 13.

Schurz's expense.⁵⁰ At the time Lincoln issued his first call for troops, a movement for the organization of cavalry companies was started in New York. An attempt to organize these troops into a duly authorized regiment met with discouragement, for General Scott was certain that the war would be over before the cavalry could be equipped and properly drilled.⁵¹ Schurz heard of these companies and went to their headquarters at Palace Garden where he induced them, in spite of their racial antagonism, to join his German companies.⁵²

It took much to gratify Schurz's insatiable desire for a field of action. Busy as he was with his cavalry organization he had still other ambitions. By the middle of May he was again in Washington.⁵³ From a correspondence which followed between Lincoln and Schurz one may conclude that Schurz hoped to be commissioned brigadier general, and in command of a New York brigade, consisting of four German regiments, to be sent immediately to Fortress Monroe.⁵⁴ Lincoln was in favor of pleasing his German friend, but evidently Secretary Cameron did not favor the project.⁵⁵ With this opposition even Lincoln's *finesse* as a manipulator was unable to bring about the desired results.

⁵⁰ Memorandum in Chase MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

⁵¹ Beach, *The First New York Cavalry*, 9-11. Stevenson, *Boots and Saddles*, 5-9.

⁵² Beach, *The First New York Cavalry*, 14.

⁵³ Thayer, *John Hay*, notation in Hay's diary of May 13.

⁵⁴ Letter from Schurz to Lincoln, New York, May 19, 1861, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 180-182. Letter from Lincoln to Schurz, May 16, 1861, Schurz MSS, Library of Congress.

⁵⁵ Letter from Lincoln to Schurz, May 16, 1861, Schurz MSS, Library of Congress. Lincoln here stated that he hoped to make Schurz brigadier general but as yet had not been able to accomplish it. Letter from Lincoln to Cameron, May 13, 1861: 'You see on the other side of this sheet that four German regiments already raised in New York wish to form a brigade and have Carl Schurz for their Brigadier General. Why should it not be done at once? By the plan of organization I see I am to appoint the generals. . . . I am for it unless there is some valid reason against it.' Nicolay and Hay, *Complete Works*, ii, 46.

The last of May, Schurz's military operations were suddenly brought to a close by a letter from Seward informing him that his presence in Madrid was necessary.⁵⁶ Schurz, turning his cavalry regiment over to Colonel A. T. McReynolds, began preparations for his departure.⁵⁷ Early in June, disappointed in not having the opportunity of informing Seward regarding the proper way to conduct the war,⁵⁸ the political refugee who nine years previously had been driven to the American shore by the waves of European revolutions, left New York harbor, clothed with the honor of minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary to Madrid. The enthusiastic liberal was again to breathe the stifling atmosphere of despotism.

⁵⁶ Seward to Schurz, May 29, 1861. Department of State, *Instructions, Spain*. Seward feared the Legation was without a duly accredited minister or *chargé d'affaires*. Preston, American minister during the Buchanan administration, had been recalled. Perry, before receiving his appointment as *chargé d'affaires*, had written to Seward stating that he was planning his return to the United States.

⁵⁷ When Colonel McReynolds went to Washington for the purpose of procuring the ratification of the above transfer, he met with opposition from both General Scott and Secretary of War Cameron. Cameron stated that the authority to raise a cavalry regiment had been given Schurz as a political favor, that it had since been a source of regret to him and that he now intended withdrawing the authority. Lincoln taking the power into his own hands requested that Cameron endorse the transfer. Secretary Cameron, thereupon, gave qualified approval saying as he did it: 'I wish the President would remember there is a War Department.' The entire regiment, called the 'Lincoln Cavalry,' was mustered into service by the following September. Stevenson, *Boots and Saddles*, 25-27.

⁵⁸ Schurz to Seward, Madrid, August 6, 1861. 'You remember perhaps that one morning a few days before I left America, I expressed the desire to have a conversation with you about war matters. You declined. It was then that I wished to point out to you the great mistakes that were being committed in the general disposition of our troops, probably the identical mistakes which have afterwards proved fatal. I am certain I was right then, and I feel now I might be of some use in the management of our military affairs.' Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

CARL SCHURZ THE DIPLOMAT¹

BARBARA DONNER

SPAIN had never had a feeling of sympathy or even respect for the United States. On the eve of the Civil war her attitude was particularly inimical. The manifest destiny program entered upon by the Polk administration, the filibustering expeditions led by the Cuban patriot, Narciso Lopez, the impudence of Pierre Soulé, and the Ostend manifesto of the jingoists had created a feeling of distrust if not actual hostility toward the United States. In view of these factors, Spain foresaw in the Civil war the possibility of decreasing the power of the United States in the western hemisphere.

The importance of the attitude of Europe toward the American crisis was immediately recognized. As early as February 28, 1861, Jeremiah S. Black, secretary of state in the Buchanan administration, sent to the American ministers in Europe a circular letter instructing them that should the states in rebellion make an effort to gain recognition of their independence they would be expected to use such means as they judged necessary to prevent its success.² When William H. Seward became the secretary of state, he renewed Black's instructions and sent to each minister a copy of Lincoln's inaugural address to be submitted to their governments for the purpose of acquainting them with the policy which the United States intended to follow.³ By the

¹ This is the second and concluding article on Carl Schurz. It is a part of the author's doctoral dissertation on 'Carl Schurz and the Civil War.'

² 37 cong., 2nd sess., *Executive Documents, Papers Relating to Foreign Relations*, 1861, 15-16.

³ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

middle of April, William Preston, minister to Madrid, had received a pledge from the Spanish government that the southern commissioners would not be received without his being fully informed of the fact. Further than this the Spanish government was unwilling to go.⁴

The Santo Domingo affair from the beginning complicated the relations between the United States and Spain. Santo Domingo, which since 1795 had been self-governing, staged a revolution early in March, 1861. Immediately the captain general of Cuba sent troops and vessels to the island, hoisted the Spanish flag, and declared the island annexed. The people of Spain, regardless of class or party affiliations, were enthusiastic about the annexation.⁵ In fact, the revolution is alleged to have been instigated by the wanning O'Donnell government for the purpose of turning the minds of the Spaniards from the controversial domestic questions to the support of the government in its foreign policy.⁶ Seward, seeing in the Santo Domingo affair an opportunity to shift the attention of the people from the slavery question to a foreign war which he thought the cotton states would support, on April 2 made a vigorous protest to Tassara, the Spanish minister at Washington.⁷ Preston, maintaining that it was a deliberate attack on the part of the Spanish to gain possession of the islands, without instructions from

⁴ Preston to Seward, April 22, 1861, *ibid.*, 244.

⁵ Perry to Seward, April 20, 1861 (confidential and unofficial). Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

⁶ Donaldson Jordan and Edwin J. Pratt, *Europe and the American Civil War* (Chicago, 1931), 245. Henry B. Clarke, *Modern Spain, 1815-1898* (New York, 1906), 268.

⁷ Seward to Tassara, April 2, 1861: 'You will not be surprised I am sure, when I add that this reported attempt to introduce Spanish authority within the territory of Dominica, if it shall prove to be authentic can not fail to be taken as the first step in a policy of armed intervention by the Spanish government. . . . I am directed to inform you . . . the President will be obliged to meet further prosecution of enterprises of that kind in regard to either the Dominican Republic or any part of the American Continent or islands with a prompt, persistent and if possible, effective resistance.' Department of State, *Notes to Spanish Legation*, vii.

Seward, protested in the name of the Monroe doctrine.⁸ In spite of Seward's energetic protest and repeated energetic protests on the part of Preston, the Spanish government on May 20 officially announced the annexation of the island.⁹

At the same time that Preston was declaring so vociferously against Spain's violation of the Monroe doctrine he was working assiduously in the interests of the confederacy.¹⁰ No doubt Horatio I. Perry's confidential letter to Seward in which he stated that the legation at Madrid could not be changed too quickly had much to do with Schurz's sudden departure for Spain.¹¹ The last of May, Preston finally received his letters of recall and Perry became chargé d'affaires. Almost immediately he received instructions from Seward that a vigorous protest in regard to Santo Domingo should be made and that the Spanish government should be informed of the firm intention of the United States to maintain the protest.¹² But since the annexation was already an accomplished fact, Perry at the time in the midst of a discussion with the Spanish government in regard to neutral rights, did not immediately force the issue.¹³ However, when Spain on June 17, following the example of England and France, issued her proclamation of neutrality, thereby recognizing the belligerency of the southern states, Perry carried out Seward's instructions.¹⁴ Thus, when Schurz ar-

⁸ Preston to Seward, April 14, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

⁹ Preston to Seward, May 19, 1861, *ibid.*

¹⁰ Perry to Seward, confidential and unofficial, April 20, 1861: 'Southern Confederacy has begun to propagate ideas here favorable to their policy and against the North. Mr. Preston serving that section—he spends money freely and flatters certain classes.' *Ibid.* Schurz to Seward, October 9, 1861: 'Mr. Preston it seems left the impression here that the South would cheerfully acquiesce in the aggression of Spanish power in the Antilles, while the federal government, representing the North, was Spain's real enemy.' *Ibid.* Also, Perry to Seward, June 14, 1861, *ibid.*; Perry to Seward, September 21, 1861, *ibid.*

¹¹ Perry to Seward, confidential and official, May 5, 1861, *ibid.* Perry had been the secretary of the legation from 1849-55.

¹² Seward to Perry, May 21, 1861, Department of State, *Instructions, Spain*.

¹³ Perry to Seward, June 17, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

¹⁴ Perry to Seward, July 1, 1861, *ibid.*

rived in Madrid, Spain had given only a conditional promise that the southern commissioners would not be received, the proclamation of neutrality had been issued, and a vigorous protest had been made in regard to the Santo Domingo affair.

From the beginning it was evident that Schurz's appointment would not be agreeable to the Spanish court. The minister of state and other members of the government had frequently manifested their lack of sympathy with Schurz for Soulé had made them skeptical in regard to political refugees.¹⁵ Therefore, when Perry heard that the Queen was to leave Madrid on July 15, he immediately sent a telegram to Schurz at Paris recommending that he plan to arrive in Spain in time to be received by the Queen before her departure, for he did not deem it advisable that the presentation be delayed.¹⁶ Schurz arrived in Madrid on July 13, and according to previous arrangements made by Perry that same day had an interview with the Spanish minister of foreign affairs, Calderon de Collantes, and the next evening presented his letters of credence to the Queen.¹⁷ Although the equilibrium of the Spanish court was somewhat disturbed by Schurz's appearing 'within the sacred precincts of the royal palace in a black frock coat,'¹⁸ his court apparel not yet having arrived, Perry's anxiety was greatly relieved and the intransigent Liberal had won his first diplomatic victory in the despotic court of Madrid.

The firm stand taken by the United States in regard to Santo Domingo made Schurz's position somewhat embar-

¹⁵ Perry to Seward, July 14, 1861: 'It was easy for me to show also, though I had never enjoyed the pleasure of any personal communications with Mr. Schurz, how his political course was and must continue to be wholly distinct if not diametrically opposed to that of Mr. Soulé.' *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ To his parents, August 19, 1861, Joseph Schafer, *Intimate Letters of Carl Schurz, 1841-1869* (Madison, 1928), 258-263.

raising. As Perry says: 'To present himself immediately after a diplomatic demonstration of that nature with an ordinary letter of credence full of amity and good wishes for the Queen of Spain and with nothing further to say on the subject was to destroy the effect of the protest.'¹⁹ According to diplomatic custom the presentation of a protest of that nature is invariably followed by a temporary retirement of the minister, but Seward, who by this time was not quite so certain of the efficacy of foreign wars as a remedy for secession, had instructed Schurz to confine his actions to a 'protest against the assumption of Spanish authority in the island.'²⁰ Schurz shaped his conduct accordingly. He addressed the members of the government only in matters of business and confined himself to those 'official visits which are prescribed by custom and contrived to be generally polite without showing any superfluous assiduity.'²¹

On the question of the recognition of the southern confederacy Schurz gained no definite promise. The sympathies of the Spanish government were 'from the beginning with the faction which seemed to offer some hope of dividing the Republic and diminishing our power in the Western hemisphere.'²² Schurz, at Seward's suggestion, tried to enlist the sympathy of the government for the northern cause by explaining to Calderon that the filibustering against Cuba and the entire Cuban annexationist movement had its origin in the political ambition of the slave owner.²³ This argument had very little effect on Calderon, for he was most interest-

¹⁹ Perry to Seward, August 19, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

²⁰ Seward to Schurz, June 10, 1861, Department of State, *Instructions, Spain*.

²¹ Schurz to Seward, August 5, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

²² Perry to Seward, September 21, 1862, *ibid*.

²³ Schurz to Seward, August 26, September 5, 1861, *ibid*. Perry had previously used this argument in an attempt to gain the sympathy of the government. *Foreign Relations*, 1861, 245-247.

ed in gaining a pledge from the United States that she would not 'pounce upon their transatlantic possessions' as soon as disposition was made of her internal difficulties.²⁴ Accordingly, he informed Schurz that the relations between the United States and Spain would be precarious as long as the Santo Domingo protest 'hung like a menace' over the Spanish government.²⁵ Since the United States was in no position to maintain the protest, Schurz, according to Seward's instructions, attempted to divert Calderon's attention by informing him that the foreign policy of the United States was determined by both the executive and legislative departments and that he could make no further statement until after the consideration of the question by congress at its next regular session.²⁶ In the meantime, he led Calderon to suppose that the policy exercised by Spain in regard to the American blockade and the closing of the Spanish ports to privateers would have much to do in determining the policy which congress would ultimately adopt.²⁷

Spain's stand in regard to neutral rights gave the United States very little cause for complaint. Although Schurz on numbers of occasions called the attention of the Spanish government to slight derelictions, which she was at all times ready to rectify, Spain adhered quite rigidly to the terms of her proclamation of neutrality.²⁸ In all questions arising in regard to the rights of neutrals Schurz took a firm but un-

²⁴ Schurz to Seward, October 9, 1861, *ibid.*

²⁵ Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

²⁶ Schurz to Seward, September 5, 1861, *ibid.* Seward to Schurz, August 14, 1861, Department of State, *Instructions, Spain*.

²⁷ Schurz to Seward, September 5 and 15, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

²⁸ *Foreign Relations*, 1861, 248, 251-292. Thomas J. McCormack, editor, *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner*, 1809-1896 (Cedar Rapids, 1909), ii, 494-495. Koerner was Schurz's successor as minister to Madrid.

For the principle terms of the proclamation of neutrality see *Foreign Relations*, 1861, 247-248.

prejudiced stand and showed an excellent knowledge of previous practices. In fact on this question he evidenced a much more intelligent grasp of the subject than did the secretary of state.²⁹

The Mexican affair was perhaps the most serious question that demanded Schurz's attention during his career as a diplomat. Mexico, after declaring her independence in 1821, had experienced one kaleidoscopic revolution after another and since each successive revolutionary government had been compelled to resort to foreign loans, the finances of the country had long been in chaotic state. For some time previous to the Civil war, the American government had feared European intervention to compel the settlement of claims.³⁰ Spain in particular, saw in the possibility of such intervention an opportunity to regain her former prize possession in the western hemisphere.³¹ In the autumn of 1860 Spain had attempted to send a fleet to Mexico ostensibly for the settlement of claims but in reality for the purpose of extending Spanish authority and influence.³² Lewis Cass, the secretary of state, immediately notified the Spanish minister that the 'United States will regret any unjust claim against Mexico, and will not permit any hostility against the legitimate government of the Republic of Mexico.'³³ When the Mexican congress in July, 1861, approved a decree, previously issued by the newly elected President Benito Juarez, suspending the interest of all external debts, the O'Donnell

²⁹ This is shown in the controversy relative to confederate vessels entering foreign ports. For Seward's view see Seward to Schurz, September 18, 1861, *ibid.*, 257-259. For view of Calderon de Collantes see memorandum of a conversation between Calderon de Collantes and Schurz on October 6, 1861, *ibid.*, 270. For Schurz's view see Schurz to Seward, October 17, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

³⁰ James F. Rippey, *The United States and Mexico* (New York, 1926), chap. xi, 197-211.

³¹ Herbert I. Priestly, *The Mexican Nation, a History* (Chicago, 1923), 346.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.* 'America for the North Americans' had already become a good American doctrine.

government saw an opportunity to 'disarm the formidable opposition' which threatened it by an enterprise which would be likely to 'dazzle the eyes of the multitude.'³⁴

As soon as the Spanish newspapers announced the possibility of European intervention, Schurz called on Calderon to ascertain Spain's intentions and to inform him 'that in everything that happened in Mexico, a state contiguous to our frontier the United States had a material interest,' and that therefore it was a 'legitimate desire on our part to be informed of the plans which foreign powers might entertain with relation to that republic.'³⁵ Seward, realizing the helpless situation that the United States was in at the time, instructed Schurz to inform Calderon that the United States 'deemed it important to their own safety and welfare that no European or other foreign power shall subjugate that country and hold it as a conquest establishing there a government of whatever form, independent of the voluntary choice of the people,' but that the United States did not object to intervention 'for the redress of injuries sustained by the invading state.'³⁶ Spain's dream of the extension of her authority in the western hemisphere was finally blocked by joint intervention on the part of France, England, and Spain in which the dominating influence of France, soon convinced General Juan Prim, the leader of the Spanish expedition, that 'there was no hope of Spanish domination of the intervention or the imposition of any Spaniard, himself or another, upon the Mexican throne.'³⁷ About all Schurz could do in the crisis was to acquaint the Spanish government with the stand taken by the secretary of state and to

³⁴ Schurz to Seward, September 27, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

³⁵ Schurz to Seward, September 7, 1861, in 37 cong., 2nd sess., *Executive Documents*, 219-220.

³⁶ Seward to Schurz, October 14, 1861, *ibid.*, 220-222.

³⁷ Priestly, *The Mexican Nation*, 349.

watch closely the trend of affairs. That he did this without antagonizing the Spanish government is evidence of judiciousness and tact in diplomacy. In the Mexican affair as well as in all the controversies that arose between the United States and Spain, Schurz showed a conciliatory spirit, was independent but at all times courteous, firm but not aggressive, and evidenced a remarkable patience for a man of his impulsive temperament.

Schurz's greatest services as a diplomat, however, consisted in the influence he exerted on the Liberal group in Spain. For once Horace Greeley as a political prophet did not come far from the mark. As in England and France the domestic politics of Spain had much to do with determining her foreign policy. The popularity of the annexation of Santo Domingo and the repeated assertions on the part of the federal government that the war was for the preservation of the union and not for the destruction of slavery prevented the Liberal press from giving the North its whole-hearted support.³⁸ Schurz soon got into touch with the Liberal leaders, furnished articles for the Liberal press, and in this way exerted an influence on the government which was far more effective than the exchange of diplomatic notes.³⁹ With the Liberals back of the North, or at least not willing to see the slaveocracy recognized, the O'Donnell government which depended for its support on both the Royalists and Liberals did not dare risk entering upon a policy which would not be

³⁸ Schurz to Seward, San Ildefonso, September 14, 1861, Frederic Bancroft, editor, *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz* (New York, 1913), i, 185-191.

³⁹ Schurz to Seward, August 19, 1861: 'The whole Liberal Press has embraced our cause with the greatest warmth and vigor and is working to place facts in the right light before the Spanish people.' Department of state, *Despatches, Spain*. Schurz to Seward, September 21, 1861: 'It is known by the ministry that we are in personal communication with some of the most formidable leaders of the opposition and it may be supposed not without reason that in case of a continuance of the unfriendly attitude of the government and its organs, we might be able to embarrass them considerably in their own internal concerns.' *Ibid.*

accepted by the Liberal group. In despatch to Seward dated August 19, Perry makes the following statement in regard to Schurz:

He has seen some of the right men already and produces a good impression, he inspires confidence and will gain influence precisely in that direction where the representatives of the powers fail constantly in Spain. I mean with the leaders of the people; and I hardly need to say to you that this is more important to our interests than dancing attendance at the Palace or dining and drawing with the aristocracy and employees of the present government.⁴⁰

By November, Schurz was popular with the Liberals, treated with courtesy by the Spanish government, and Spain had made no move toward the recognition of the southern confederacy. The influence which Schurz exercised on the question of recognition is difficult to measure. Had Spain been one of the leading powers of Europe, Schurz's influence with the Liberals might well have been decisive; but as a secondary power she was cautious and although keenly desirous of regaining a part of her lost possessions in America, she was in no danger of recognizing the confederacy as long as England and France made no move in that direction.

Although Schurz in a comparatively short time 'had completely overcome all the prejudices which preceded his arrival on account of his former Republicanism' and had won the confidence of the Spanish government as well as its respect⁴¹ the 'quiet life of a diplomat' soon became irksome to him. Since he had worked so prominently for the election of Lincoln, it was impossible for him to 'enjoy the comforts and luxuries of a distinguished position' while the coun-

⁴⁰ Perry to Seward, August 19, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*. Perry also makes the following statement in regard to Schurz: 'His political principles, his talent and good sense fit him for this mission better than any other minister from the United States whom it has been my fortune to know.'

⁴¹ Perry to Schurz, November 10, 1861, Schurz MSS, Library of Congress.

try was on 'the road to wreck and ruin.'⁴² For a man who was convinced that the success of the northern armies rested upon his shoulders, Schurz was too far away from the field of action. The news of the disaster at Manassas led him to curse the hour 'when he had accepted the honors of a diplomatic post.'⁴³ Schurz was a sensitive soul; the defeat at Manassas was to him a personal defeat and he felt humiliated. He could not see a 'Spaniard smile without suspecting he was laughing at the Bull Run rout.'⁴⁴ His chagrin and distress of mind upon reading the following newspaper article can well be imagined:

A letter from London says that there the subject of all conversation and of all jokes is today the grand battle of Manassas in the United States; in which the fierce sons of the North have revealed a cowardice which has no example in history. The details of the incredible terror which the grand army of the Potomac experienced in its long flight of twenty miles would be painful if they were not so eminently ridiculous.⁴⁵

At all times convinced of his own superior knowledge, Schurz was certain that the disaster would not have happened had his plans in the general distribution of the troops been carried out.⁴⁶ Accordingly, upon receiving the news of the defeat, he wrote to the president indicating what he conceived to 'have been the fatal error in the management of the campaign' and requesting that Lincoln employ 'his services at home if he should see fit to do so.'⁴⁷ At the same time

⁴² Schurz to Sumner, Madrid, November 14, 1861, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 195-200.

⁴³ Carl Schurz, *Reminiscences* (New York, 1906-1908), ii, 271.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Schurz to Seward, August 19, enclosure, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*. Extract from *España* which reflected ministerial opinion.

⁴⁶ Schurz to Seward, private, August 6, 1861, *ibid.* Schurz to Frederick Althaus, December 9, 1861, in Schafer, *Intimate Letters*, 266. Speaking about his desire to return to the United States Schurz states: 'The reason for this step is my conviction that over there they have no understanding of the true situation of affairs and blindly run themselves into the most irresponsible courses.'

⁴⁷ Schurz to Seward, private, August 6, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*. In this despatch Schurz mentions having written a letter to Lincoln. The letter was evidently not sent through the regular diplomatic channels.

he sent a despatch to Seward stating that he was certain that he could be of some assistance in the management of military matters and that it was to him an 'intolerable idea to live in enjoyment of ease and comfort and social distinction while at home our friends are slaughtered, armies are lost, and the dangers threatening the Republic are daily increasing.'⁴⁸ Seward after conferring with Lincoln wrote Schurz that he had been directed by the president to say

That he appreciates and highly approves the patriotic motives which induce you to offer to withdraw on any terms he might impose or even unconditionally from your mission and to return to this country and engage in the military service, but that upon due consideration he is of the opinion that your remaining in Madrid, now that you have entered upon the duties of your mission, will probably be very important, while he trusts that the military organization which has been in the course of successful prosecution will be sufficiently effective.⁴⁹

Schurz reconciled himself to the situation but did not despair and in the next few months when not busy with official duties devoted his time to the study of military works.⁵⁰

Schurz's association with the Liberals of Spain and his observation of the attitude of the Liberals throughout Europe early convinced him that only by putting the northern cause on a high moral plane could the recognition of the confederacy by the European powers be blocked. This conviction, in addition to the fact that to Schurz emancipation had always been as important as the preservation of the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* In a letter to his friend Theodore Petrasch, Schurz says: 'As happens in moments of exhaustion, I sought rest. For that reason I went as minister to Spain, but I soon found that rest at a time like this was for me the most irritating exertion. The rebellion which is to decide the future of this country quickly reached enormous proportions. The noise of the struggle penetrated even to my hermitage in Madrid. It became uncanny to me in my quiet. The enforced apathy of insipid diplomatic life was terribly oppressive to my temperament and my conscience.' Schafer, *Intimate Letters*, 284-285.

⁴⁹ Seward to Schurz, September 3, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

⁵⁰ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, ii, 273.

union,⁵¹ led Schurz to send a despatch to Seward in which he clearly stated his views.⁵² After explaining that the North had 'lost caste' in the eyes of the Liberals by denying the extinction of slavery as the ultimate object of the war Schurz said:

There are in my opinion but two ways in which the overwhelming perplexities can be averted, which a rupture with foreign powers added to our troubles at home, would inevitably bring upon us. The one consists in great and decisive military successes speedily accomplished, and the other in such measures and manifestations on the part of the government as will place the war against the rebellious slave States upon a higher moral basis and thereby give us control of public opinion in Europe.

The former in his opinion could not be reasonably expected in the light of the past but as to the second it was

his profound conviction that, as soon as the war became distinctly one for and against slavery public opinion will be strongly, so overwhelmingly in our favor, that in spite of commercial interests or secret spite no European government will dare place itself by declaration or act upon the side of a universally condemned institution.

Schurz's despatch was not particularly convincing to the secretary of state, who felt that 'the policy on which an administration charged with the duty of maintaining itself and preserving the Union shall conduct a Civil War must be confined always to the existing condition of political forces and to the public sentiment of the whole country,' and who en-

⁵¹ In Schurz's public letters he emphasized the preservation of the union while in many of his private letters the emphasis is on emancipation. Schurz to Adolph Meyer, August 13, 1861, speaking of Manassas says: 'At best it will have the effect of prolonging the war without changing the final outcome. There will be no further talk of compromise and finally there will be an end to slavery.' Schafer, *Intimate Letters*, 256-258. Schurz to N. B. Judd, Madrid, August 27, 1861: 'These are indeed dark days for American pride, but if the war brings about the final destruction of the slavery system, as it bids fair to do, the price we are paying is not too heavy.' Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 183-184. 'What will be the results of this war? In what attitude stands the anti-slavery of the West? What is thought of controversy between Fremont and the government? It would be one of the most disheartening effects of the war if it terminated without some great results for the benefit of mankind.' Extract from letter from Schurz, Madrid, October 8, 1861, in Milwaukee *Sentinel*, January 14, 1862.

⁵² Schurz to Seward, September 14, 1861, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 185-191.

tertained no 'fears that we shall not be able to maintain ourselves against all who combine against us.'⁵³

Schurz who saw in Seward's reply a 'symptom of that sort of petulance which is apt to warp a man's judgment'⁵⁴ and who was convinced that Seward had not shown his despatch to Lincoln decided that it was his duty to acquaint Lincoln personally with his views. So convinced was he with the correctness of his ideas that he thought of resigning his post at Madrid for the purpose of returning to the United States to work for the cause. Perry, however, advised him that it would be far more prudent to request a leave of absence as a change in the legation at that time would be most undesirable.⁵⁵ Schurz also thought that his resignation might be looked upon as a demonstration against the administration 'and this he deemed undesirable' as long as it could be avoided.⁵⁶ Furthermore, he realized that if he resigned such an act would be to the political advantage of his enemies.⁵⁷ Therefore, very carefully disguising the real purpose of his desire to return, he wrote to Lincoln requesting leave but definitely stating that if it were not granted he would be forced to offer his resignation. No doubt, anticipating the reaction of both Seward and Lincoln he wrote: 'It is no mere impatience which makes me slight the advantages of my position here, but grave doubts arising from my view of the ensemble of our affairs; and to have these

⁵³ Seward to Schurz, October 10, 1861. In regard to the progress of the northern army Seward, no doubt with some subtlety says: 'While you who have gone abroad are hearing apprehensions of the failure of the government on all sides, there is not one citizen who has remained at home who is not more confident in the stability of this Union now than he was on the day of your departure upon your mission. This confidence is not built on enthusiasm but on knowledge of the true state of the conflict and the exercise of calm and dispassionate reflection.' *Ibid.*, 191-193.

⁵⁴ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, ii, 304.

⁵⁵ Schurz to Seward, November 17, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*. Schurz to Sumner, November 14, 1861, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 195-200.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

doubts solved one way or the other is for me a matter not of convenience or curiosity but of conscience.⁵⁸ At the same time Schurz wrote to Charles Sumner, the great advocate of abolition not only for its own sake but as a weapon in the war, soliciting his aid in the securing of a leave of absence.⁵⁹ In this letter he more frankly explained his reasons for desiring to return to the United States, stating that northern victories 'if the North should be lucky enough to achieve any' would be 'useless butcheries' and that the only way to save the union was for the government to declare the emancipation of the slaves. If a leave were not granted, he fully intended to resign, for he 'would never cling to the advantages of an official position' which might hinder him in 'following the dictates of his conscience.' Perry, who by this time had learned to admire and respect Schurz, interceded in his behalf. The following extract from a letter to Sumner from Perry, gives some idea of Schurz's mind at the time:

The contest at home absorbs his whole soul. He is ardent, full of faith, full of patriotism, but feels that we are traversing a crisis of life or death for the country and that everyone who has anything in himself or any influence on the people should be at work with his whole strength for the salvation of the Republic . . . he must go home or he will be seriously ill. His brain and his great heart will be too much for his body unless their force can be sent outside himself into the struggle for America at least for a time.⁶⁰

Schurz awaited with anxious impatience the administration's decision. On December 17, Charles Francis Adams tele-

⁵⁸ Schurz to Lincoln November 11, 1861, *ibid.*, 193. In a despatch to Seward a few days later he said: 'I do not wish to annoy my government with continual requests for favors which it might be difficult to grant. If the government had been under any obligation to me which I am very far from assuming they would have to be considered fully discharged by the appointment which sent me here. I know that I have no further claim and that all that remains for me to do is to perform my duty to my country and I desire to perform it.' Schurz to Seward, November 15, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*.

⁵⁹ Schurz to Sumner, November 14, 1861, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 195-200.

⁶⁰ Perry to Sumner, Madrid, November 10, 1861, Schurz MSS, Library of Congress.

graphed him that his leave of absence had been granted.⁶¹ The next day Schurz left for Hamburg, by way of Prussia, to join his family and later to take a steamer from Hamburg to America. By the kindness of the Prussian government the political refugee as American minister to Madrid was allowed to travel through the Rhenish province unmolested.⁶² Early in February, Schurz was again in the United States.

To convince the president of the correctness of his views regarding emancipation now became Schurz's objective. In a very short time he had explained to Lincoln the contents of the despatch which he had sent to Seward on September 18. Lincoln was interested but not convinced.⁶³ To issue the proclamation at the risk of losing the support of the border states, northern Democrats and the conservative wing of his own party, in Lincoln's opinion, was to defeat the purpose of the proclamation. At all times appreciating the importance of watching the trend of public opinion he recommended 'that Schurz look around a little and in a few days to come back to him and tell him of the impression' he had gathered.⁶⁴

⁶¹ Perry to Seward, December 1, 1861, Department of State, *Despatches, Spain*. In the despatch granting the leave Seward states: 'The President instructs me to say in reply that he thinks it cannot be assumed with entire safety that your absence from Madrid would be productive of no public injury and also that, in his judgment, the condition of our affairs at home is not only not such as to justify the apprehension you express, but on the contrary, is prosperous and eminently hopeful. He therefore prefers that you shall remain at your post. Nevertheless he instructs me to defer to your own wishes. If therefore, upon reviewing the subject you still think it preferable that you come home, leave of absence is in that case granted. . . .' Seward to Schurz, December 2, 1861, Department of State, *Instructions, Spain*.

⁶² The following order by Count Schwerin, Prussian minister of the interior, was posted in all the police offices of the Rhine province: 'Carl Schurz, at present ambassador of the United States of North America at Madrid proposes to return to New York by way of the Prussian (Rhenish) territory. Your excellency is informed of this intention on the part of Carl Schurz and is further requested to notify the same with all the despatch to the public authorities and officials of that province and instructs them to place no hindrance in the way of his traveling in those parts.' *Milwaukee Journal*, February 4, 1862; Anton Erkelenz, *Carl Schurz der Deutsche und der Amerikaner* (Berlin, 1929), 77.

⁶³ Schurz, *Reminiscences*, ii, 310.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Schurz consulted numbers of congressmen and later went to New York to survey the field. Here he assisted in the organization of an Emancipation society and at its initial meeting at Cooper institute delivered his only public speech on emancipation.⁶⁵ The central theme of the address was that after the defeat of the 'rebels in arms,' the North would face the problem of the restoration of the union, and that this could not be brought about without the abolition of slavery, for as long as slavery continued to exist it would control the sympathies and aspirations of the southern people and thus make loyalty to the union impossible. As initial steps toward emancipation Schurz recommended the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, the confiscation of the slaves of the persons engaged in the rebellion, and a fair compensation to loyal slave states and loyal masters who would agree to some system of emancipation. During the meeting a despatch from Washington announced that Lincoln had that day sent a message to congress recommending that a joint resolution be passed pledging the pecuniary aid of the national government to any state voluntarily emancipating its slaves.⁶⁶ When Schurz returned to Washington, Lincoln expressed to 'him his satisfaction with what had been done, and trusted that the public discussion of the subject would go on so as to familiarize the public mind with what would inevitably come if the war continued.'⁶⁷ During these months the president was slowly moving toward a more radical anti-slavery policy and by the latter

⁶⁵ Schurz, *Speeches*, 240-268. Some idea of the stand on the slavery question by the members of the group may be formed by noting the men on the committee of arrangements: William Curtis Noyes, Park Godwin, Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, George Cheever, Theodore Tilton, Samuel Lyon, Peter Cooper. *The Liberator*, March 7, 1862.

⁶⁶ *New York World*, March 7, 1862. Schurz states that before delivering the speech he read it to Lincoln who said: 'Now, you go and deliver that speech at your meeting on the 6th of March and maybe you will hear something from me on that day.' Schurz, *Reminiscences*, ii, 332.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 328.

part of July had decided that the situation demanded the emancipation of the slaves.⁶⁸ How much influence the foreign situation had on Lincoln's ultimate decision is difficult to determine.⁶⁹

Schurz in his struggle for emancipation showed his characteristic impatience and his inability to see a situation in the large. His preconceived ideas regarding slavery no doubt had much to do with his firm conviction that only by proclaiming the freedom of the slaves could the North hope to win in the war. Lincoln did not minimize the importance of the European attitude but he was unwilling to adopt a more radical anti-slavery policy until certain that he would be sustained by public opinion. Had he proclaimed the freedom of the slaves in the autumn of 1861, as urged by Schurz, instead of a year later, it is highly probable that the Emancipation proclamation would have defeated its own purpose.⁷⁰ If northern success had depended exclusively upon the attitude taken by Europe toward the crisis, Schurz's predictions could be regarded as sound. Charles Francis Adams and John L. Motley, ministers to England and Austria respectively, both urged the necessity of a moral issue for the pur-

⁶⁸ On July 22 Lincoln read to his cabinet the Emancipation proclamation which he intended to issue. John G. Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln, Complete Works* (New York, 1894), vi, 125.

⁶⁹ Stephenson gives the following reasons for the stand taken by Lincoln: (1) Desire to disarm the vindictives who were advocating emancipation. (2) Determination to preserve the war power of the president. (3) Desire to further the cause of the Liberal party throughout Europe. (4) Shift of ground to the question of emancipation would arouse new enthusiasm and bring new recruits. Nathaniel W. Stephenson, *Abraham Lincoln* (Indianapolis, 1924), 252-253. Adams states: 'Lincoln's plan of emancipation and his first proclamation had little relation to American foreign policy.' Ephraim D. Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (New York, 1925), ii, 114.

⁷⁰ The congressional elections in the autumn following the proclamation show that even at that time the people of the North were not of one opinion in regard to the question. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, Republican states in 1860 went Democratic. Other factors for the defeat of the administration were: (1) Suppression of freedom of speech and of the press. (2) Arbitrary arrests. (3) The suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. (4) The failure of McClellan in the Peninsular campaign and the withdrawal of Lee's army intact from Maryland and Bragg's from Kentucky.

pose of gaining diplomatic victories.⁷¹ That the Liberals of Europe would have blocked any move toward intervention, after the war for the union became one for the destruction of slavery, is a quite generally accepted fact. However, it can not be said with equal certitude that France, England, and Spain would have intervened in behalf of the confederacy had the proclamation not been issued. Victory in the field certainly had much to do with the stand taken by Europe and for this the support of an undivided North was essential. Schurz correctly analyzed the attitude of the European Liberals but in doing so he completely overlooked the domestic situation.

As the middle of March approached, Schurz realized the necessity of coming to some decision regarding his future. He preferred entering the army provided he could 'have a sphere of action sufficiently large.'⁷² Moreover, he was looking forward to taking a prominent part in the affairs of reconstruction and for the realization of this ambition he thought a 'footing in the army' would be to his advantage.⁷³ Lincoln, always quite willing to defer to Schurz's wishes, at the end of March submitted to the senate his appointment as brigadier-general and on April 15 the appointment was confirmed.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, ii, 98.

⁷² Schurz to Sumner, May 16, 1862, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 207-208.

⁷³ Schurz to his mother, May 5, 1862, Schafer, *Intimate Letters*, 270-272.

⁷⁴ Schurz immediately sent his resignation to Lincoln but not until June 10 did he present it to Seward. Schurz to Lincoln, Washington, April 15, 1862, State Department, *Despatches, Spain*. Also Schurz to Seward, Harrisonburg, June 10, 1862, *ibid*. The following letter no doubt explains the delay in sending to Seward the resignation: 'I saw the President again who repeated to me that he did not want to see me in the army unless he could secure a respectable command and influential position, and that if he could find none for me, he desired that I should go back to Spain.' Schurz to Sumner, May 16, 1862, Bancroft, *Speeches*, i, 208. That Schurz's appointment met with some opposition is shown by the following: 'Schurz nomination for brigadier-general being subject to the Senate's approval met with some opposition and hung fire for a time,' *Memoirs of Gustave Koerner, op. cit.*, 211-213. Schurz to Sumner, Philadelphia, April 6, 1862: 'Last night I expected to receive the news of my confirmation but heard nothing. Has my case been up for consideration and is there any difficulty? Will you have the kindness to request General Wilson in my name to press the matter? I am somewhat anxious to get out of this provisional condition.' Schurz MSS, Library of Congress.

